

## **5 Things You Can Do if a Youth Tells You That S/He is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning Youth in Drug and Alcohol Treatment**

1. **Thank them for trusting you.**
2. **Acknowledge their courage.**
3. **Discuss relationships, including dating and break-ups.** You can ask "Is there anyone special in your life?" or "Are you seeing anyone these days?"
4. **Suggest additional resources and sources of support**, such as the Fenway Community Health Center Peer Listening Line, (800) 399-PEER.
5. **Use their words** – homosexual, lesbian, queer, tranny, etc. If they don't know what language to use, let them know that they don't have to have a label for themselves.

Developed in collaboration with the GLYS Project – (800) 530-2770 x214.

SPHERE – the Statewide Partnership for HIV Education in Recovery Environments, a program of Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc. (800) 530-2770 x224 or SPHERE@HCSM.org

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## **5 Facts to Remember When Working With Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth**

1. It's not "just a phase" – they may still be learning who they are, but that doesn't mean this is an experiment or a plea for attention.
2. They may recognize their same-sex attractions or true gender identity, but may not have a resolution or label for their identity.
3. They may have never heard anything positive about being GLBTQ; you may be the first person to tell them they are normal and healthy. You can help them connect with other GLBTQ youth or with adult role models.
4. A young person who identifies as GLBTQ may be sexually active with the same sex or other sex, or may not be sexually active at all. Offer them information relevant to their needs.
5. Don't make assumptions based on dress or behavior. If you create a safe space through use of inclusive language and physical symbols (such as "safe space" magnets from GLYS) they will see you as a safe person to talk to.

This card is a collaboration of SPHERE and GLYS, programs of Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc.  
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